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Brian Inglis, *Science and parascience. A history of the paranormal, 1914–1939*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984. Pp. 382. ISBN 0-340-26325-3. £12.95.

I. Grattan-Guinness

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'Foundations and Methods' including Jan Sebestik on 'The rise of the technological science', and 'Studies' such as M.C. Duffy on 'Mechanics thermodynamics and locomotive design'. The journal has made a good beginning and deserves to be a success.

University of Bath

R. A. BUCHANAN

J. F. Clarke and F. Storr, **The Introduction of the use of mild steel into the Shipbuilding and Marine Engine industries**. Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, 'Occasional Papers in the History of Science and Technology no. 1', 1983, Pp. 97. £3.25.

Messrs Clarke and Storr have taken a significant initiative in producing this A4 format duplicated publication, as it brings what is essentially a research discussion paper to a wider audience than it would otherwise have received. The paper deals with the time-lag in the adoption of mild steel for boilermaking and shipbuilding after Bessemer's famous discovery of 1856. They show by reference to the contemporary technical literature the confusions and problems involved in the adoption of the new material, and the success with which these difficulties were overcome.

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Brian Inglis, **Science and parascience. A history of the paranormal, 1914-1939**. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984. Pp. 382. ISBN 0-340-26325-3. £12.95.

In describing psychical research between the two world wars, Inglis cleverly imitates and modifies the title of his previous history *Natural and supernatural*, published in 1977, which charted the development of this subject 'from earliest times to 1914'. For in this new book he covers the period when science was definitely science, and not the natural philosophy of yesteryear, when theorising unashamedly spoke of fluids, spirits and aethers and so might accommodate psychical research without intellectual grotesquerie. But then the kinds of reductionist philosophy—materialist, positivist behaviourist—which had their origins in the era of natural philosophy came to take up dominant positions in the age of positive science. How did psychical researchers fare then?

One of the principal merits of Inglis's book is to show that, to an extent which would surprise even many specialists, *phenomena* were still to be had, in some abundance. Much of the book is taken up with detailed summaries of the efforts of major inter-war psychics and their experimenters, including several notable scientists (especially physicists and psychologists). Of especial note is the 'Margery' case in the USA during the 1920s; its reputation as an unfortunate disaster is exposed by Inglis as a deliberate debunking of that time (ch. 5).

But to speak of science and parascience is to lay the emphasis on *theorising* and *experimentation*, and its attendant social and institutional factors. Inglis shows how the debunkers were greatly aided by the snobbism of the Society for Psychical Research, then dominated by the aged Mrs. Sidgwick (ch. 6). In an attitude which Inglis wittily calls 'high and dry', they disparaged physical phenomena in favour of mental effects, most of which were clearly of little consequence.

However, over and above these local difficulties, the change from natural philosophy to science had consequences for *psychical research itself*, which Inglis notes but could have stressed more. The key figure here is J. B. Rhine in the USA, a self-made exile from the 'Margery' case who went to the opposite extreme and initiated parapsychology in the narrow sense of the term. Banned from consideration were most manifestations of purportedly paranormal phenomena: study was reduced almost entirely to the simplest possibilities of telepathy and clairvoyance to be disclosed from listing with Zener cards, and with the paranormal effects to be detected not by direct experimental procedures but from posterior statistical appraisal (ch. 8). Thus the positivist dogmas were brought in to psychical research to make it look respectable—only for the abuse from psychologists, scientists and philosophers to be as violent as it had been decades before against the upholders of the supernatural.

Inglis's readable study is of interest to the historian of science not only for its account of developments in one of the fringes of science but also for its case studies of conduct, ethical and unethical, by both scientists and outsiders. It is also enhanced by adequate referencing in endnotes, an instrument that was provided for its 1977 predecessor but then unaccountably omitted by the author from its printing.

I. GRATTAN-GUINNESS

Middlesex Polytechnic

Dorinda Outram, **Georges Cuvier. Vocation, science and authority in post-revolutionary France.** Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984. pp viii + 299. ISBN 0-7190-1077-2. £25.

After the publication of William Coleman's study of the zoological work of 'Georges' Cuvier, the reviewer lamented the fact that there was no comprehensive biography of Cuvier, one of the outstanding figures among the galaxy of scientific talent in Paris in the early nineteenth century. Does the present book fill this gap? Certainly Dorinda Outram has done sterling work in the archives to emerge as a great authority on the life of Cuvier. But one cannot help thinking of the biography of a scientist as involving an analysis of both *life and work*. Here one looks in vain for any extended discussion of science. Only in Chapter 7 is there discussion of Cuvier the palaeontologist, linked to its obvious religious implications.

This is a work of great originality, and the documentation is extensive. What one misses most is a straightforward exposition for those not so steeped in the Cuvier literature as the author. The treatment of the period of the Restoration of the Bourbons (analysed in Chapter 5) *precedes* the discussion of the Museum (Chapter 8), with which Cuvier was first associated in 1795. The book thus combines detailed knowledge with a very personal approach to the subject. The chapter on Cuvier the administrator in Napoleonic France is disappointing. It is a pity that Negrin's 1977 thesis (Howard E. Negrin, *George Cuvier: Administrator and Educator*, Ph.D. New York University, 1977. pp. vi + 546. University Microfilms International, 78-3124.) came to the author's attention too late to be used. Frequent extensive quotations in French and without translation may deter those who are not both francophile and francophone.

There are, however, many interesting perspectives in this book, beginning with a persuasive analysis of how Cuvier moved in 1795 from obscurity in the